

Grammar Spotlight:

Prepositional Phrases

A prepositional phrase is a group of words that help make the meaning of the sentence clear. It is a phrase- not a clause- because it does not contain a subject or verb. A prepositional phrase, therefore, can be crossed out of a sentence because it does not have any essential parts in it.

A prep phrase will start with a word such as over, under, above, before, through, between, etc. 80% of prep phrases begin with words that can fit in the sentence "I WALKED _____ THE BRIDGE." Other words that don't really fit in that sentence include "before," "during", and "after".

A prep phrase, therefore, is made up of a prepositional word and all the words up to the noun that follows, which is called the OBJECT OF THE PREPOSITION.

Ex: I walked across the bridge. (across=prep; bridge=object of preposition)

Ex: He fell off the bridge into the cold, raging creek.

Off the bridge=prep phrase; bridge= object of preposition

Into the cold, raging creek=prep phrase; creek= object of preposition

Yes, a sentence can have two or more prepositional phrases!

NOTE: if you see a verb in the phrase, it can't be a prepositional phrase; it is a clause!

Before I eat dinner, I brush my teeth. (before can be a prep, but here it is working as an adverb clause...but a prep phrase can be hidden inside of a clause!

Ex. Before he goes into the classroom, he twirls around three times.

Practice on next page...

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Practice: In each sentence, locate the prep phrase or phrases, and circle the object of the preposition.

- 1. In the morning, make me coffee and biscuits!**
- 2. He can't see very well in the dark.**
- 3. When democracy is threatened, the US Army goes into foreign countries.**
- 4. The chair broke during period 6, and the custodian took it out of the room.**
- 5. During the Pink Out, the entire stadium was covered in pink shirts!**
- 6. Cedar Crest's football team won in the rain, but several players were covered with dirt and mud.**
- 7. The alien landed near my house, looked around, and flew away to the stars.**
- 8. When a sentence is a run-on, it can be corrected with a comma and conjunction.**
- 9. If you ride your bike in the dark, use a powerful headlight and a bright taillight!**
- 10. Every three minutes, one woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States.**